

Can we have an open debate about smoking?

The issues that surround smoking are so complex, and so emotional, it's hard to debate them objectively.

In fact, many of you probably believe there is nothing to debate.

Over the years, you've heard so many negative reports about smoking and health—and so little to challenge these reports—that you may assume the case against smoking is closed.

But this is far from the truth.

Studies which conclude that smoking causes disease have regularly ignored significant evidence to the contrary. These scientific findings come from research completely independent of the tobacco industry.

We at R.J. Reynolds think you will find such evidence very interesting. Because we think reasonable people who analyze it may come to see this issue not as a closed case, but as an open controversy.

We know some of you may be suspicious of what we'll say, simply because we're a cigarette company.

We know some of you may question our motives.

But we also know that by keeping silent, we've contributed to this climate of doubt and distrust. We may also have created the mistaken impression that we have nothing to say on these issues.

That is why we've decided to speak out now, and why we intend to continue speaking out in the future.

During the coming months we will discuss a number of key questions relating to smoking and health. We will also explore other important issues including relations between smokers and non-smokers, smoking among our youth, and "passive smoking."

Some of the things we say may surprise you. Even the fact that we say them may prove controversial.

But we won't shy away from the controversy because, quite frankly, that's our whole point.

We don't say there are no questions about smoking. Just the opposite. We say there are lots of questions—but, as yet, no simple answers.

Like any controversy, this one has more than one side. We hope the debate will be an open one.

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company